Hodge

Witness of the Holy Spirit

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THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THE BIBLE.

The doctrine of the Witness of the Holy Spirit to the divine origin of the Bible, as taught by Calvin and by the Reformed and Lutheran theologians of the succeeding century, has fallen into an almost complete neglect. This is partly due to the error of identifying the Witness of the Spirit with the argument from Christian experience which is much used in modern Apologetics, but is also partly due to a mistaken mystical conception of its nature, and to the influence of the prevalent antisupernaturalism upon modern theological thought. It is worth while, therefore, to consider the nature, object, and apologetic value of the doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit to Scripture.

It should be noted at the outset that this is not an isolated truth, but a part of the saving work of the Holy Spirit in the application of Redemption, and that therefore it is closely related to the whole organism of Scripture truth. It is one aspect of the question as to the efficient cause and the ground of saving faith. It has, therefore, certain presuppositions which were clearly recognized and stated, especially by Calvin and by most of the great theologians, both Lutheran and Reformed, of the succeeding century. The chief of these presuppositions is that God can be known only by revelation. This is true of our natural knowledge of God. The origin and development of our knowledge of God is not a realization of God's self-consciousness in man, as pantheism conceives it; but is due to the self-revealing act on God's part in Creation by which He has made Himself manifest, creating man with a religious nature capable of seeing God in the works of His hands.

Furthermore, faith is conviction of truth grounded on evidence. In this broad sense it is not distinguished from knowledge. Its distinctive feature is that in faith the evi-

dence is not that of self-consciousness or reason, but consists in a testimony external or objective to our consciousness. Religious faith, therefore, must be grounded in the testimony of God. This is true in reference to the knowledge of God obtained from general revelation in Nature and man. We must rely on God's witness to Himself in the heart and in His Creation. This is just as true of a true or saving faith in God's Word.

In addition to this, it must be remembered that sin, obscuring and distorting our natural knowledge of God, and darkening man's heart or mind, has rendered him incapable of seeing God in His works, and no less incapable of truly seeing Him in the special revelation in Scripture by which He has restored and completed His revelation of Himself. There is need, therefore, of a complete renewal and illumination of the sinner in order to the exercise of saving faith in God and in His Word. Saving faith, like all truly religious faith, must rest on God's testimony and presupposes man's capacity to recognize the testimony as from God.

It is in accordance with these fundamental truths that the old Protestant theologians asserted that the Bible is its own witness because God speaks in it. This is not reasoning in a circle. It does not mean that we believe the Bible to be of God because God says so in it, and we believe that it is He who says so because the Bible is His word. It means simply that the Bible is self-witnessing; that it bears in itself the marks of its divine origin if we have the eye of faith to see them. This can be seen from the fact that the Bible demands faith from every one to whom it comes with its message. Its demand for faith is not limited to those capable of weighing the external evidence for its divine origin. The ground of such faith, therefore, must be ultimately the self-evidencing character of the Bible. It follows also from what has been said, and it was fully recognized by the old Protestant theologians, that doubt or unbelief as to the divine origin and authority of Scripture, is not due to any deficiency in or want of objective evidence, but

to the condition of heart of sinful man. This is not only the teaching of Scripture, it is proved by the fact that the same evidence for the Bible which convinces one man, fails to convince another, and by the further fact that the same amount of evidence may fail to convince a man at one time and yet later produce a complete conviction.

All these truths are taught in Scripture as well as by experience. Sin with its obscuration of our religious knowledge is conceived of as a power of darkness which rules over this sinful world, and the Gospel revelation by contrast is called light. This contrast is always represented as fundamental and ineradicable by natural means so that the transition from darkness to light is only by means of supernatural revelation and supernatural illumination. Darkness, then, in the Old Testament is not only used in a quasi-objective sense to depict the misery, estrangement from God, and want of all true knowledge of God which characterized the world before the advent of Christ and the revelation of God which He made, so that Christ's coming was a light to the world (Isa. ix. 1 [2]; lx. 2), but also expresses the ignorance or spiritual blindness of sinful man apart from inward illumination (Job v. 14; xxxvii. 19). This is not a mere absence of light, nor a merely negative use of the term darkness, as where it represents the essential unknowableness of God (Deut. v. 22; Psa. xcvii. 2), but is a positive condition of the wicked (1 Sam. ii. 9), and a penal infliction (Deut. xxviii. 29; Job. v. 14).

In the New Testament we find the same quasi-objective use of the term to express the dense ignorance of God which spreads over the earth apart from the revelation of God in Christ and the light of the Gospel, so that Christ is the light of the world, and the Gospel a light which shines in a dark place (Jn. i. 5; 2 Pet. i. 19 etc.), and also the same subjective sense of the term which denotes the spiritual blindness of the sinner. In the teaching of Jesus as recorded in the Synoptists, the term is most frequently used in an eschatological sense to denote the mental and spiritual

condition of those in the state of future punishment. In the Gospel of John, however, it is a term denoting the dense ignorance which is totally unable to see the divine revelation of light which has always shone and still shines into it from the Logos and from the Incarnate Word (Jn. i. 5). In this sense Christ is come as a light into the darkness of the world (Jn. xii. 46). But the condition of spiritual blindness of the individual apart from the inward spiritual illumination which Jesus gives, is set forth when a walk in darkness is contrasted with possession of the light of life. Here the light is that by which true life is obtained. It is the life-giving inward light which Jesus gives the darkened soul. And by contrast the darkness is spiritual blindness (Jn. viii. 12). Paul also uses the term darkness to denote the spiritual blindness of the natural man. Before God creatively illuminates the mind, this darkness is as dense as that of the outer world at Creation before God said "let there be light" (2 Cor. iv. 6). It is therefore represented as a power which has authority to rule over men and from which God must deliver them (Col. i. 13). It affects man's whole understanding or mind so that the Gentiles are described as darkened in their understanding. In this state they are alienated from God, and this is due to the ignorance and hardness of heart which always accompany this darkness or spiritual blindness (Eph. iv. 17, 18). It is, therefore, a spiritual blindness due to sin, and is so characteristic of the condition of the natural man that Paul describes the former condition of his readers absolutely as darkness (Eph. v. 8). This is a condition of hardness or stubborn resistance of the truth of the Gospel, a condition of blindness wrought by sin (Eph. iv. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 4). According to Peter this is a condition out of which man can come to the light of the Gospel only by an effectual call from God (1 Pet. ii. 9).

In consequence of this spiritual blindness the natural man i.e. the unregenerate man, is unable to receive the revelation made by the Spirit through the Apostles (1 Cor.

ii. 14ff). In this context Paul says that he relied for success in his preaching of the Gospel, not on man's wisdom, but on the demonstration of the Spirit, in order that the faith of the Corinthians might not rest on the wisdom of man, but on the power of God. The reason for this is because the unregenerate man does not receive the things of the Spirit, and cannot receive them because they are spiritually discerned. The regenerate man, on the other hand, does receive these things, and the reason for this is that the former has not and the latter has spiritual insight or discernment. Moreover Paul here teaches that this spiritual discernment consists in the apprehension of the religious value, truth, and divine origin of the doctrines discerned, and that it is due to the operation of the Spirit of God upon the heart. And in the preceding chapter the Apostle asserts that the very same Gospel with the same amount of external attestation, was an offense to the Jew and foolishness to the Greeks, but to those who were inwardly and effectually called it was the wisdom and the power of God (1 Cor. i. 23, 24). Hence, as we have seen, if this Gospel be hid i.e. its truth and saving efficacy unrecognized, it is not for lack of evidence, but because men are lost and blinded by sin (2 Cor. iv. 4).

Consequently one important aspect of the work of Regeneration is an illuminating action of God's Spirit on man's heart or mind, removing the spiritual blindness. In the earlier parts of the Old Testament it is the work of God's Spirit as the source of life in the cosmos and of supernatural power in the theocratic leaders, that is most prominent. In the Psalms and Isaiah, however, the Spirit of God is represented as dwelling in the individual believer as the source of an ethical change. This is clearly the case in Psa. li. where David prays for the creation of a new heart and the renewal of a right spirit within him, and prays God not to take the Spirit of Holiness from him. The Holy Spirit was present in Israel through Moses so that in their rebelliousness they grieved Him (Isa. lxiii.

10f). This inward work and presence of God's Spirit, however, is chiefly characteristic of the Messianic times. The new Church is to be a spiritual Church (Isa. xliv. 3; lix. 21; Ezek. xxxix. 29), His continued presence being the great blessing of the coming Messianic age (Isa. lix. 21). He is the source of spiritual life to God's people (Ezek. xxxvii. 14), and His universal outpouring and influence will mark the Messianic age (Joel ii. 28-32).[1] In all this, however, the illuminating activity of the Spirit in removing the blindness due to sin is not specifically mentioned. But that this is part of the saving work of God in man's heart is made perfectly clear where the Psalmist prays that God will illumine his eyes lest he sleep the sleep of death (Psa. xiii. 4 [3]), and especially where he prays that God would open his eyes that he might behold wondrous things out of His law (Psa. cxix. 18); so that, though he believed that the entrance of God's word gives light to the soul (verse 130), this can only be through the opening of the blind eyes. Hence to be "taught of the Lord" (Isa. liv. 13) and to "know the Lord" (Jer. xxxi. 34) refer to this saving knowledge which results from the illuminating work of God in the soul. It is this same inward work of spiritual enlightenment which Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would accomplish for His people (Isa. xlii. 7), and which was fulfilled when Jesus came as the Light of the World.

When we turn to the New Testament we find that this enlightening work of the Spirit is most fully developed, the saving work of the Spirit in the individual being characteristic of the New Testament doctrine of the Holy Spirit in contrast to that of the Old Testament. This is not made explicit in the Synoptic Gospels, though they evidently contain clear intimations of this truth. Jesus' miracles of healing were more than signs of His Messiahship and Deity; they were symbolical of His power to heal the terrible disease of sin. The healing of the blind man as recorded in

[1] Oehler, *O. T. Theology*, pp. 507, 508; B. B. Warfield, "The Spirit of God in the Old Testament," PRES. AND REF. REVIEW. VI, pp. 665-687.

Mark and Luke teaches the supernatural power of Jesus to open the blind eyes of the soul (Mk. viii. 22-26; Lk. xviii. 35-43). In the latter instance (ver. 42) the answer of Jesus to the blind man that his faith had saved him, indicated the deeper than physical healing that the Saviour wrought. Another indication of the truth that mere external evidence will not convince a spiritually blind heart is seen in the fact that Jesus would do no mighty works to convince men of His claims when there was a sinful opposition of the heart to Himself. Moreover He taught in the Parable of the Rich man and Lazarus that unbelief in reference to the Old Testament was not due to any want of evidence, nor could it be removed by any additional external proof (Lk. xvi. 31). The knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven is not a natural possession of man, but a gift of God (Mt. xiii. 11); and the same thing is true in regard to the recognition of Jesus' Messiahship and Deity, as our Lord's words to Peter at Caesarea Philippi clearly show (Mt. xvi. 17). The great revealing work of Christ, as set forth in Mt. xi. 25ff, clearly cannot be limited to the revelation of God in Jesus' Person and life and teaching, but must include His lifegiving touch on the sinner's heart by which alone His objective revelation of God is made effective.

It is, however, in our Lord's teaching as recorded in the Gospel of John that this truth is most fully and richly developed. In the earlier chapters the Holy Spirit is represented as the source of regeneration and spiritual life. But in the third chapter there is a hint that this involves an enlightening of the mind. Nicodemus says that he knows that Jesus is a teacher come from God, and it was in reply to this statement that Jesus set forth the necessity of the new birth from God's Spirit, implying that a true recognition of Himself as a teacher is possible only to one who is born anew by the Spirit (Jn. iii. 3ff). But it is in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters that the revealing and enlightening work of the Spirit is most fully

expounded. The departure of Jesus to the Father is as momentous in the history of Redemption as was His Advent. His revealing and saving work, He teaches, is to be carried on by the Spirit who is "another Paraclete", to take Christ's place and carry on His work; or more accurately Christ is to be present in His Church by the Spirit, especially as the Spirit of truth (Jn. xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 12ff). The Spirit is to glorify Christ by completing His revelation, and by guiding the Church into all truth. These promises include not only the completion of the organism of special revelation through the Apostolic revelation, but also the spiritual illumination of the Christian Church through the ages. It is, moreover, "the things of Christ" and not new truths which are the object of the Spirit's witness. He does not speak from Himself but is a witness to the truth which is Christ Himself. The work of the Spirit in this respect, therefore, is a supernatural one, removing the blindness of sin, and its object or objective content is the "things of Christ" or the Gospel.

Paul develops fully this teaching of Jesus. Jesus by His Resurrection becomes the exalted Lord, the "quickening Spirit" (πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν 1 Cor. xv. 45), and the source of spiritual light as well as life (2 Cor. iii. 16f). According to Paul neither the law of Moses nor even the Gospel of Christ can remove the darkness of mind due to sin (2 Cor. iii. 12 ff). When the Spirit is given as the power of a new supernatural life, then it is light within as well as without. The Spirit removes the veil of blindness on the sinner's heart. In the fourth chapter this same supernatural power is referred to God. This is to emphasize its essentially creative nature. God, who at the Creation when the world was in physical darkness, said "Light shall shine out of darkness", has shined in the same creative or supernatural way in the hearts of Christians, so that they can recognize God's glory in Christ (2 Cor. iv. 6); which glory shines in the face of Christ far more brightly than on Moses' face (iii. 7). He who cannot see this light has been

blinded by sin (iv. 3f) so that the failure to see the glorious light is not due to defect of light but defect of vision. Here the reference is probably to Paul's conversion, but not exclusively nor to what was peculiar to it; but rather to what is common to all believers (ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ἡμῶν). In Gal. i. 15f Paul indeed speaks of an inner revelation of Christ to him, but here he refers rather to his authoritative knowledge of the Gospel which he had as an Apostle, as is also the case in 1 Cor. ii. 10.

The Spirit of the Lord is therefore for Paul the source not only of spiritual life but of saving knowledge of the truth. The need of this spiritual illumination according to Paul, as we saw, lies in the blindness of the natural man to divine things (1 Cor. ii. 6-16), so that Christ crucified is foolishness to him and yet the power of God to those effectually called (1 Cor. i. 23f). Moreover, the Spirit which discloses the mystery of the Gospel to the Apostles (Eph. iii. 5), is also the Spirit who illumines all Christians. Where the Spirit comes, therefore, Christians are enlightened in the "eyes of their heart", i.e. spiritually illumined, to know God and comprehend their glorious hope and the greatness of God's power in them (Eph. i. 18-23). The prayer, moreover, in Eph. iii. 16-19 for strengthening by the Spirit is for the purpose of this spiritual knowledge. The Gospel is a mystery i.e. something which needs to be disclosed, and even when disclosed, man, who is blinded by sin, cannot comprehend it until he has been spiritually enlightened. This great truth which Paul thus fully set forth in the Epistles to the Corinthians and Ephesians, was in the Apostle's mind from the first, for he refers to the same truth in his earliest Epistle when he writes that his Gospel came to the Thessalonian Christians not only in word but in power and in the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. i. 5).

The same truth is taught by Peter. It is true that he speaks of our being born again by God's Word, but this is only a familiar figure in which the instrumental cause is spoken of as if it were the efficient cause of this great change. The change from spiritual darkness to spiritual

light is clearly affirmed to be due to an efficient call from God (1 Pet. ii. 9). And what is true of Peter is true also of John. The anointing with the Holy Spirit gives knowledge (1 Jn. ii. 20) and the Spirit continues with the Christian as a guide to truth (ii. 21). It is by the Spirit that we know that Christ abideth in us (iii. 24; iv. 13). The Spirit, moreover, bears witness to Christ (v. 6ff.), while faith in Jesus' Messiahship is the consequence of the new birth from God (v. 1).

It is in accordance with this that true or saving faith, or what the old theologians called *fides divina,* is a gift of God or divinely wrought. It is not an arbitrary act of the soul which can be performed at will; and such is the state of man's heart that, though normally it could not be withheld upon sufficient evidence, the presence of adequate evidence does not produce it. This is because unbelief, according to Christ's teaching, springs from finding in Himself a cause of offence (*σκάνδαλον* Mt. xiii. 57; xxvi. 31), which in turn springs from a hostility of the heart to Himself. Saving faith, therefore, is impossible without a total change of heart or regeneration. Jesus, therefore, prayed for Peter that his faith should not fail, thereby acknowledging that it is a gift of God; the Apostles prayed that the Lord would increase their faith (Lk. xvii. 5); and Jesus told Peter that his faith in His Messiahship and Deity rested on an inward revealing act of the Father. In the Gospel of John this is brought out more fully. Unbelief is a sin because it shows an attitude of hostility to God and Christ, and faith likewise discloses a state of the heart, a "being of the truth" (Jn. xviii. 37), a "hearing and learning of the Father" (Jn. vi. 45). Consequently only he that is drawn by the Father can come to Christ (Jn. vi. 44), and this "coming" or faith is the Father's gift (Jn. vi. 65). Faith is the gift of God's grace and only follows a complete change of heart.

Paul also, although he does not in so many words ascribe the producing of faith to the Holy Spirit except perhaps in 2 Cor. iv. 13 and Eph. ii. 8, nevertheless speaks of

a power of God which works in man before he reaches true faith (Col. ii. 12). The preaching of the Gospel, moreover, is the power of God to those effectually called, and foolishness to those without this call (1 Cor. i. 23f); and the preaching of the Apostle was in the demonstration and power of the Spirit, so that the faith of his hearers depended not on human wisdom or arguments but on the power of God (1 Cor. ii. 5). It is by God's Spirit alone that we can confess Jesus as Lord, and no man can truly call him Lord without the Spirit's power (1 Cor. xii. 3). Similarly, according to the Apostle John, faith in the Messiahship of Jesus is the result of being "born of God" (1 Jn. v. 1).

The Bible, then, teaches that because of the darkness of the world due to sin which has marred God's image in man and Nature, God has made a special revelation of Himself in an objective and supernatural manner, which revelation culminates in Jesus Christ and the Apostolic interpretation of His Person and work. This is a light to the world. It is self-evidencing and bears the marks of its divine origin. But sin-blinded man, just because his religious sense is injured and his heart and mind darkened by sin, cannot see God in His Word or come to any experimental knowledge of Him through the revelation it makes. The Holy Spirit in regeneration, therefore, must enlighten the mind, renew man's whole nature, and give him spiritual light, thus enabling and moving him to recognize the marks of God in His Word. This action of the Spirit is therefore internal, supernatural and hence objective to man's consciousness. But it communicates no new truth; it simply enables us to exercise saving faith in God, in Christ, and in God's Word. It therefore gives us not only an ability to believe, but also a certitude of faith, not only in our own sonship, as Paul teaches (Rom. viii. 16), but in the deity of Jesus and the divine origin of His Gospel and of God's Word.[2]

[2] On the whole subject of the Scripture doctrine of the enlightening work of the Holy Spirit, besides the general works on Biblical Theology, see the following which discuss the subject briefly: Buchanan,

The Witness of the Holy Spirit to the Bible, then, is not something standing apart and isolated from the life of faith; it is a part of the inward enlightening work of the Spirit which we have briefly set forth, and of precisely the same nature. It is of importance to understand the nature and value of this truth, because it has fallen into neglect, or else has been misunderstood, and so laid open to criticism.

This particular application of the doctrine of the Spirit's work was first adequately developed by Calvin, and by him handed on to the theologians of the succeeding century of both the Reformed and Lutheran branches of Protestantism, though in the Lutheran theology it found full treatment only in the seventeenth century. When rightly conceived it will be seen to be a truth of fundamental importance in relation to such great questions as the origin and certitude of faith.

It is necessary, however, to guard it from misconceptions. It was no less acute a thinker than Strauss[3] who affirmed that in this doctrine the Protestant system found a standpoint for faith independent of the fallible judgment of the Church and of the unstable judgment of the individual subject of faith. But because Strauss conceived of the Spirit's witness in a mystical way as being the communication to man of a new truth separate from the Bible, i. e. the proposition that the Bible is God's word, he thought the doctrine open to criticism and held that in adhering to it the Protestant theology unavoidably abandons its position in regard to the authority of Scripture, and turns aside into Mysticism or Rationalism. If, he says, this Witness of the Spirit to the divine origin of the Bible is the communication

The Holy Spirit, pp. 88-111; Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit.* p. 152; Beversluis, *De heilige Geest en zijne Werkingen,* pp. 407-411, 470; Gloël, *Der heilige Geist in der Heilsverkündigung des Paulus:* pp. 287-300; Nösgen, *Wesen und Wirken des heiligen Geistes,* II, pp. 40-46; Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the New Testament,* pp. 152f, 179, 233. Also works on the theology of the Gospel of John, such as B. Weiss, *Johann. Lehrbegriff,* pp. 285ff; E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel, Its Purpose and Theology,* pp. 254f, 338, 349.

[3] Strauss, *Die Christliche Glaubenslehre,* I. 130ff.

of a truth to man, i.e. that the Bible is God's word, then this new truth revealed becomes the fundamental thing, and it itself must require support. Who shall certify to us that this truth really is from God? Either another witness of the same kind is necessary, in which case we have the *regressus ad infinitum* of Mysticism; or else the human mind is supposed simply to recognize the truth revealed as appealing to it, in which case faith depends solely on ourselves and we fall ultimately into Rationalism. This criticism is acute, and is valid against the doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit to the Bible as Strauss conceived it i.e. as giving a "content" of truth apart from the Bible itself. It is necessary, therefore, to understand the nature of this Witness, especially since pretty generally in modern times either Strauss' misconception has been repeated, or else the Witness of the Spirit has been confounded with the argument from Christian experience.

Turning then to the nature of this Witness of the Holy Spirit to the Bible, it should be noted first that it is not the direct communication to the Christian by the Holy Spirit of a truth or proposition, as for example that the Bible is the Word of God. This is really a form of Mysticism. Such a view is not implied in the Scripture teaching as it has been set forth, nor is there any such promise in the Scripture concerning the work of the Spirit. This conception of the Witness of the Spirit would make it analogous to the idea of Revelation in the case of the Prophets and Apostles who received communications of truth directly from God. It would, then, itself require to be authenticated, and consequently we would have a never-ending chain of revelations, as Strauss pointed out. In addition to this difficulty, this view by making faith depend upon the new truth revealed, would subordinate the Scriptures to this new revelation, and fail to recognize the self-evidencing character of the Bible. It therefore cuts the knot, and fails to untie it. None of the old Protestant theologians conceived of the Witness of the Spirit in this way. All em-

phasized the self-evidencing character of the Scripture which they assert is αὐτόπιστος. Calvin especially devotes a whole chapter[4] to criticising the Anabaptists, and points out that the Word is the instrument of the Spirit who uses the Word and confirms it, but reveals no new truth,[5] so that the Witness of the Spirit confirms the Scriptures and does not supercede them.

Neither is this Witness of the Spirit an influence which causes to emerge in our consciousness a blind or ungrounded conviction that the Bible is the Word of God. Faith is a conviction which is grounded on evidence. If the evidence be lacking—i.e. evidence which at least is valid for the subject of the faith—the conviction will not emerge. The opening of the blind eyes of the soul is in order to an act of vision which terminates on an object viz. the Bible with its marks of divine origin. It is not a blind or vague feeling that the Bible is from God; it is rather an intuitive or immediate perception of the marks of God's authorship which are upon the face of the Scripture. The view of the Witness of the Spirit which we are criticising, moreover, fails entirely to take account of the fact that the Bible is its own witness, that it bears upon itself the marks of its divine origin, and that the ultimate reason or ground of faith is this fact that God speaks to us through the Scripture. All that is required is that the veil shall be removed from our eyes in order that we may see God in the Scripture, and it is this removal of the blinding effects of sin which takes place in regeneration, which constitutes the Witness of the

[4] Calvin, *Institutes,* I, 9.

[5] *Ibid.* I, 9:3. *Cf.* also I, 9:1 "The Office of the Spirit which is promised to us is not to feign new and unheard of revelations, or to coin a new system of doctrine, which would draw us away from the received doctrine of the Gospel, but to seal to our minds the same doctrine which the Gospel delivers". In I, 7:5 Calvin, it is true, speaks of a "sense" which can be produced by "nothing short of a revelation from heaven". But this, as Dr. Warfield says, is only to describe its "heavenly source"; not its mode or nature. *Cf.* B. B. Warfield, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God", Princeton Theological Review, VII, pp. 219-324. It confirms the Scriptures according to Calvin, it does not supercede them. *Cf.* also, I, 9:3.

Holy Spirit. This agrees with what we have seen to be the teaching of Scripture which uniformly represents the enlightening work of the Spirit as an opening of the eyes of the soul for an act of objective vision, and not a mere subjective impression.

This, moreover, is the uniform teaching of the old Protestant theologians. All alike emphasized the fact that the Bible is self-evidencing or αὐτόπιστος as they called it. Calvin laid the greatest emphasis upon this point. He taught that the Scripture bears on its face the marks of its divine origin so that when our eyes are opened we recognize this clear evidence as we would immediately distinguish between white and black or a sweet and bitter taste.[6] In precisely the same sense all the Reformed and Lutheran theologians taught that the Scripture bears the marks of its own credibility and is αὐτόπιστος.[7]

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[6] Calvin, *Institutes* I, 7:2—"But if any one should inquire 'How shall we be persuaded of its divine origin, unless we have recourse to the decree of the Church?' this is just as if anyone should inquire, 'How shall we learn to distinguish light from darkness, white from black, sweet from bitter?'. For the Scripture exhibits as clear evidence of its truth, as white and black things do of their colour; or sweet and bitter things of their taste."

[7] *Cf.* Polanus, *Syntagma Theol.* I, 14. Piscator, *Aph. Doct. Christ.* p. 16 asserts that it is the result of the Witness of the Spirit that the Scripture shows itself as self-evidencing or αὐτόπιστος. Ursinus, *Loci,* pp. 436ff regards the Witness as enabling us to recognize the marks of God in the Scripture. Zanchius, *Op.* VIII, 332-334 says that the deity of the Scripture shines from its pages like the sun even though we are so spiritually blind that we cannot see it. Maresius, *Systema,* pp. 11, 12, lays emphasis on the fact that the testimony of the Spirit is not a blind one apart from the marks of God in the Scripture. Maccovius, *Loci Com.* pp. 27, 28 asserts the same thing; and Heidegger, *Corp. Theol.* II, 14, expressly says that the Witness is not a "bare persuasion" without any grounds—"Testimonium illud Spiritus S. non est nuda persuasio animi, quae fallaciae obnoxia esse queat, vel motus cordis irrationabilis, qualem enthusiastae pro divino venditant: sed est fulgor et splendor eius in tenebrosis cordibus nostris, ministrans nobis illuminationem cognitionis gloriae Dei in facie Jesu Christi (2 Cor. IV 6), ut ita remotis naturalibus obstaculis omnem excellentiam et divitias verbi divini introspicere valeamus." Likewise the Lutheran theologians, although they conceived of the nature of the Witness of the Spirit somewhat differently from the Reformed theologians, agreed

The Witness of the Spirit, therefore, is not mystical either in the sense that it consists in the immediate revelation of a truth or proposition to the mind concerning the Scripture, or in the sense that it causes the emergence of a blind, irrational, or ungrounded conviction. The marks of God are in the Bible, and the want of faith is due to the effects of sin on the mind, blinding it to these marks; it is not due to any want of evidence. Consequently when spiritual blindness is removed, the marks or criteria constitute valid grounds of faith.

But if the Witness of the Spirit is not mystical in either of the above senses, it is nevertheless objective to the subject of faith, and is not to be confused or identified with the argument from Christian experience, or the witness of experience to the divine origin of Christianity and the Bible. The Spirit of God by means of the Word of God does produce in the Christian an experience of salvation through Christ, which experience is inexplicable apart from the Word, is congruous with the Word, and so testifies to the Bible that it is of divine origin, the very word of God. By many theologians, especially in modern times, the Witness of the Spirit to the Bible has been identified with this argument from Christian experience. This argument has assumed several forms, but in every case the argument is of the nature of an inference from Christian experience to its cause. In its lowest form it eliminates the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit altogether, and simply argues for the divine origin of Christianity from its effects in bettering man ethically. This was the view taken by the old Rationalists. Semler argued for the divine origin of Scripture simply because it improves man, and the view of Less was practically the same.[8] Not unlike this position of the old

that it does not produce a blind conviction, and that the Scripture is self-evidencing; Gerhard, *Loci Theol.* II speaks of the Scripture as αὐτόπιστος and "winning faith by virtue of their own excellence". *Cf.* also Baier, *Compend. Theol.* Pos. 80. Quenstedt, *Theol. Didact. Polem.* I, 140, also teaches the same thing.

[8] Less, *Ueber die Religion, ihre Geschichte und Bestätigung*[2] Bd. ii. pp. 117 f. Less says that everyone who tests or tries Christianity will

Rationalists is that of those members of the Ritschlian school who deny all immediate and supernatural influence of the exalted Christ or of the Spirit upon the heart, and having thus eliminated every transcendent element in the genesis of faith, seek to explain it simply from the influence of the historical Jesus. Thus Herrmann asserts that the personal power of goodness works upon us through Jesus as He lived on earth, and through Him we believe in God. The certitude of our faith in God is thus due to the moral influence upon us of the historical Jesus. Herrmann's view was also advocated by Gottschick and Rade.[9]

This argument for Christianity and this account of the genesis of faith is a denial of the truth of the Witness of the Holy Spirit. It substitutes for the supernatural power of the Spirit, the ethical and religious effect of the truths of Christianity, as in the old Rationalism, or of the so-called historical Jesus, as in the left wing of the Ritschlian school. It rests upon a Pelagian view of sin and man's condition, and leaves wholly unexplained the fact that Jesus and the Gospel is foolishness to one man and the power of God unto salvation to another. Since it totally neglects the blinding power of sin, it is wholly inadequate as an explanation of the genesis of faith.

There is, however, a higher form of the argument from Christian experience, which has often been identified with the Witness of the Spirit. It admits the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit upon the heart in producing

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find an improvement and peace and happiness. Less calls this a witness of the Spirit, but prefers to call it an argument from experience. Consequently many Rationalists like Wegscheider rejected the doctrine altogether. On the Rationalists *cf.* Klaiber, "Die Lehre der altprotestantischen Dogmatiker von dem Testimonium Spiritus Sancti, und ihre dogmatische Bedeutung, *Jahrbuecher für deutsche Theol.* ii. 1857, p. 22.

[9] Herrmann, *Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott;* also *Gewissheit des Glaubens*[2], 59; Gottschick, *Die Kirchlichkeit der sog. Kircklichen Theologie;* Rade, "Der rechte Christliche Glaube," *Christl. Welt.* 1892, Nr. 1. For an account and criticism of the Ritschlian Theologians *vid.* Köstlin, *Die Begründung unserer sittlich-religiösen Ueberzeugung.* pp. 97ff.

Christian experience, and finds in this experience what it terms a Witness of the Spirit to the divine origin of God's Word. The Spirit by means of the Word produces in the Christian an experience of salvation, which experience is due to the hearing of the Word, is congruous with the Word, and which therefore witnesses to the truth, and so to the divine origin of the Bible. This is a valid argument, but quite distinct from the Witness of the Holy Spirit. Some of the modern theologians who have developed this argument have not fallen into the mistake of identifying it with the Witness of the Spirit, as for example Köstlin.[10] By many, however, the doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit has been reduced to this argument from Christian experience. This was done in the eighteenth century by the Supra-naturalists and the Rationalists. Thus Baumgarten[11] says that there is a twofold experience from which we infer the divine origin of Scripture; first an experience of the truth of the main content of Scripture by means of the agreement of the Scripture descriptions of states of the soul with our own, and by means of our attaining to an end not otherwise attainable when we accept the Bible way of salvation; and secondly an immediate experience of the power of the Bible on our souls. We argue from this by inference that the Bible is true and so must be divine in origin since no human book has any such witness to it. This argument from experience which has been developed in modern times by such theologians as Frank, Köstlin, and Ihmels, has by a number of theologians been identified with the Witness of the Holy Spirit.[12]

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[10] Köstlin, *op. cit.*, pp. 100 ff.

[11] Baumgarten, *Dogmatik*, pp. 120 ff.

[12] H. Cremer, *Realency. f. prot. Theol. u. Kirche,* vi. p. 760: "Dies ist das testimonium Spiritus S., die kirchliche und individuelle Erfarung von der Bedeutung der heil. Schrift. Sie bezieht sich auf die Schrift als ganzes". Precisely the same reduction of the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the argument from experience is found in the Article on this subject by Wiesinger, "Ich Glaube an den heiligen Geist", *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift,* ix. 1898, pp. 763-787; *vid.* especially pp. 778, 779: "Ist es der vom Geiste gewirkte Glaube an Jesum Christum, in dem wir

This argument from Christian experience is a valid argument for the divine origin of Christianity and the Bible, but is quite distinct from the Witness of the Spirit to the Bible. The identification of the two confuses the question of the grounds of faith with that of the origin of faith. Christian experience depends upon or grows out of a saving faith the doctrinal content of which is given by the Christian revelation in the Bible. Christian experience, therefore, presupposes a faith in this revelation and cannot give rise to such faith. The Witness of the Spirit is not one among several grounds of faith. It lies back of all such grounds as the efficient cause of the genesis of faith, enabling us to be convinced by the grounds of faith as we otherwise would not be. Christian experience on the other hand, may be a reason for faith after such faith has arisen; it cannot give rise to it since it presupposes saving faith. The distinctly Christian experiences of the transformation of life, pardon, peace, divine sonship, and sanctification—all these are produced in an instrumental sense by God's Word, and are nourished by the Word, and so witness to the saving power and hence the divine origin of the Word; but these experiences are all consequences of the faith to which the Witness of the Spirit gives rise.

Moreover this testimony of Christian experience to the Bible is not an objective witness of God to us; it is the witness of our own hearts to God's Word. It is not the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit, but the testimony of our renewed heart and experience to the Word which nourishes it. It rests moreover on an inference from our experience to the Bible as its source, and has not, therefore,

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die Gnade Gottes und des ewigen Lebens gewiss geworden sind, so sind wir ebendamit auch der Schrift, sofern sie uns diese Heilsbotschaft vermittelt, gewiss". This also seems to have been the form in which the doctrine was revived in Holland, after its rejection by the Rationalists, by Scholten; *vid.* Van Oostersee, *Christian Dogmatics,* i, p. 152. In America a view similar to that of Cremer and Wiesinger has been given in the Article by Dr. John De Witt, "The Testimony of the Holy Spirit to the Bible", PRESB. AND REFORMED REV. 1895, pp. 69-85.

the immediate character of the recognition of the divine origin of God's Word which results from the Witness of the Spirit. Although the soul may seem to possess an immediate certitude of the divine origin of the Bible, if we look only to the argument from Christian experience a syllogism will be seen to underly it, viz. the Christian is certain that his new life is from God, and he is certain that it is from the Scripture, so that he is therefore certain that the Scripture is from God. And since this witness of experience is thus subjective in character, faith is made to rest upon the experiences of the soul rather than upon the marks of divine origin in God's Word and this objective testimony of God Himself which is the ultimate ground of true faith and Christian certitude.

There is still another view of the Witness of the Spirit to the Bible which, though it endeavors to hold to the objective character of this witness as from the Holy Ghost, and not from man's experience, nevertheless resembles the argument from Christian experience in many respects. This is the view of the old Lutheran theologians. In the Lutheran theology of the seventeenth century a conception of the relation of the Holy Spirit to God's Word as a means of grace emerged which influenced the idea of the Witness of the Spirit to the Word. The power of the Spirit was conceived as being wholly in and through the Word, and not directly upon the heart as the action of a Personal Being. The Word itself, therefore, was conceived as having a supernatural power which always operates and is effective when not resisted. The Witness of the Spirit, therefore, as conceived by Quenstedt, Baier, and Hollaz,[13]

[13] The peculiar form of the doctrine in the Lutheran Church is due to the fact that it was not fully developed until the seventeenth century when the doctrine of the purely immanent relation of the Holy Spirit to the Word arose. Luther believed that the subjective appropriation of the Gospel is due to the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit "seals" the Word in our experience as a saving word, but Luther did not develop the inference that thus the divine origin of the Word is witnessed to, *vid.* Klaiber, *op. cit.* pp. 2, 3; also Martius, *Locus Dogmaticus De Testimonio Spiritus Sancti Historice et Systematice Expli-*

is really the saving efficacy of God's Word, which efficacy, however, is a supernatural one from God's Spirit in the Word. Hence these theologians said that the Spirit bears witness to the divine origin of the Word by means of the efficacy of the Word. This conception of the Testimony of

catur, p. 9. Melanchthon touches briefly upon the doctrine in the Preface to his *Loci* where he sets the "method of philosophy" over against the "doctrine of the Church", the former being by "demonstration", the latter resting on divine revelation. This latter, though witnessed to by miracles, has also the Witness of the Spirit which aids the mind to faith. Speaking of Christian truths he says—"quia res sunt extra judicium humanae mentis poritae, languidior est assensio, quae fit, quia mens movetur illis testimoniis et miraculis et juvatur a Spiritu S. ad assentiendum". The doctrine is found stated in Hutter, Q. I Prop. III; Hunnius, *Op.* Ed. 1607, i. 10; and fully developed by Quenstedt, Baier, and Hollaz. The idea is that the Spirit's influence and witness is solely through the saving power of the Word. Quenstedt, *Theol. Didact. Polem.* I, Cap. 4, Q. 9, p. 140, says that the "criteria" of the divinity of Scripture produce only *fides humana;* that *fides divina* is due to the Witness of the Spirit; and that this is found in the supernatural efficacy of the Word of God—"Quanquam multa sint κριτήρια et motiva fidei seu credibilitatis, ut vocant, quae potenter suadent S. Scripturae autoritatem, et originem coelestem, sive inducunt hominem infidelem docilem, et non malitiose repugnantem, ut credat, hoc verbum, quod Scriptura proponit, esse θεόπνευστον et vere Dei verbum: Illa tamen κριτήρια sive γνωρίσματα, quantacumque sint, fidem tantum humanam et persuasionem efficient; ultima vero ratio, sub qua et propter quam fide divina et infallibili credimus, verbum Dei esse verbum Dei, est ipsa intrinseca vis et efficacia verbi divini et Spiritus S. in Scriptura et per Scripturam loquentis testificatio et obsignatio". *Baier's* doctrine is the same—*Compend. Theol. Pos.* Proleg. C. II, parag. 22, p. 86—"Divinam fidem, qua Scripturae sacrae ex parte formalis (seu sensus aut doctrinae) divina origo agnoscatur, doctrina ipsa Scripturae omni tempore gignit, quatenus cum attentione lecta, aut voce docentis proposita, explicata et auditu percepta, per se immediate quidem, sed virtute divina, quam sibi semper et indissolubiliter conjunctam habet: adeoque concurrente, et virtutem hanc exerente Deo, intellectum quidem hominis illuminat, seu excitata cogitatione sancta et objecto congrua in assensum inclinat: voluntatem vero ejus allicit ac movet, ut intellectui assensum, sibi ipsi (Doctrinae in Scripturis comprehensae) tanquam a Deo profectae, praebendum imperat; et sic intellectum ipsum ad assentiendum, sub ratione revelationis divinae, determinet." Also p. 92 "ita etiam in ordine ad nos seu ut *fide divina* credamus, Scripturae libros, sub eo, quo nobis, idiomate, i.e. verborum in certa lingua, serie et contextu, esse divinitus inspiratos, et sic habere vim illam normativam, seu dignitatem Canonicam, non sufficit solum Ecclesiae testimonium; verum et hic internum Spiritus

the Holy Spirit, Klaiber claims, is quite different from the argument from experience since it is a testimony of the Spirit of God and not of our religious states of mind,[14] and Klaiber and Martius[15] adopt this view themselves.

This idea of the Testimony of the Holy Spirit is inadequate. We pass over the objection that it rests upon a wrong view of the relation of the Holy Spirit to the Word, and over the fact that neither Scripture nor experience

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S. testimonium, seu operationem efficacem *per* ipsam Scripturam, concurrere oportet." Thus the power of the Holy Spirit is *through* the Word solely. Precisely similar is the doctrine in Hollaz, *Exam. Theol. Acroamat.* p. 125—"Per internum spiritus sancti testimonium heic intellegitur actus supernaturalis spiritus sancti *per* verbum Dei attente lectum vel auditu perceptum, *virtute sua divina* scripturae sacrae communicata cor hominis pulsantis, aperientis, illuminantis, et ad obsequium fidei flectentis, ut homo illuminatus ex internis motibus spiritualibus vere sentiat, verbum sibi propositum a Deo ipso esse profectum, atque immotum ipsi assensum praebeat." Here the object testified to is the divine origin of Scripture; the nature of the witnessing is an internal action of the Spirit through the Word, the power being identified with the efficacy of the Word. This latter point is made clearer in the following passage where the power of the Spirit and of the Word are identified—p. 125—"Internum spiritus sancti testimonium de authentia sacrae scripturae *coincidit quoad rem cum efficacia sacrae scripturae in actu secundo spectata . . . Etenim vis effectiva,* quam verbo Dei in producendo effectu illuminationis, conversionis, renovationis, et confirmationis, tribuimus, vere divina est, Rom. 1:16, nec *differt quoad rem* a virtute, quae spiritus sancti operantis in cordibus hominum est, quanquam *disparitas sit in modo* habendi hanc vim, ut pote quae spiritui sancto ex se et a se *ceu causae principiali verbo autem participative* causae organicae competit." Gerhard, *Loci* I. Cap. II Parag. 22, pp. 9, 10, touches on the doctrine only briefly and not in such a way as to bring out the peculiar features of the Lutheran view as seen in Baier, Quenstedt and Hollaz. After speaking of the "criteria" of the divine origin of Scripture, both internal and external, he says—"Tum demum sequitur, ut Spiritus S. in cords ipsius ferat testimonium, et suorum verborum veritatem obsignet etc." The same view is held by those of the modern Lutheran theologians who have treated of this doctrine, for example Philippi, who discusses the doctrine at some length, *Kirchliche Glaubenslehre*[3], i. pp. 129ff.

[14] Klaiber, *op. cit.* pp. 20ff.

[15] Martius, *Locus Dogmaticus De Testimonio Spiritus Sancti Historice et Systematice Explicatur,* pp. 38ff; Klaiber, *op. cit.* pp. 17ff, 30ff.

warrant the attribution of any such power to the Bible, but show the truth to be quite the contrary. Looking at this view of the Witness of the Spirit in itself, we see that while it aims at the recognition of the divine source of the Witness, it really conceives of its result as a feeling of the saving power of the Bible, and not as an objective or intuitive beholding of the marks of God in the Bible. It not only, therefore, tends to reduce the Witness to an inference from Christian experience, it also limits the criteria of the divine origin of Scripture to its saving efficacy, whereas the Bible has many other marks of divine origin which the renewed mind can behold or recognize. Like the argument from Christian experience, it gives after all an inferential rather than an immediate certitude, and can be put in the form of the same syllogism, as Klaiber himself recognizes. The Christian feels the saving power of the Bible, he knows his new life is from God, and therefore that the Bible is from God. He does not, therefore, so much see and acquiesce in the self-evidencing divine character of the Scripture, as experience its power and hence infer its origin from God. The difference between this mode of conceiving of the Witness of the Spirit and that of Calvin and all the Reformed theologians may be illustrated from the case of a painting of a great master. How are we to recognize the painter? According to one view the masterpiece arouses feelings of artistic pleasure or wonder and from them we know it must be from the hand of a master. According to the other view the painting bears a number of marks of its being from the hand of such and such a master; these marks we immediately recognize if we have the artistic sense. Just so when the eyes of our heart are opened, or our religious sense restored by God's Spirit, we immediately see the marks of His hand in the Scripture.

The Witness of the Holy Spirit to the Bible, then, is not objective in the sense of being the mystical communication to the mind of a truth or proposition, nor is it a subjective inference from Christian experience. It is simply the

saving work of the Holy Spirit on the heart removing the spiritual blindness produced by sin, so that the marks of God's hand in the Bible can be clearly seen and appreciated. God testifies to the Bible by prophecy and miracle, by the greatness of the truths which it contains, by their suitability to our needs. But unrenewed man, while he may attain to a merely intellectual or "speculative" faith on the basis of rational arguments or the testimony of the Church, cannot savingly apprehend God nor see God as He is revealed as the author of the Scripture. Those who are born of the Spirit have their minds and hearts enlightened so that they are enabled and persuaded to accept the objective testimony which God gives to the Bible, and to recognize immediately or behold intuitively the marks of God's hand in the Scripture. Nothing intervenes between the human soul and the Word of God, but the soul is given the ability to see God as the Author of the Bible and to rest on its truths with a saving faith, or what the old theologians called *fides divina* because it rests on God's testimony, as distinguished from *fides humana* which rests simply on human testimony or rational arguments. The evidence for the divine origin of the Bible is not lacking, but the unrenewed man cannot be convinced by it. Hence while saving faith does not arise apart from evidence, and while normally, i.e. apart from the binding effects of sin, it could not be withheld when the evidence is present, it does not follow that it will arise when adequate evidence is present, because the heart and mind are blinded by sin so that they are not open to conviction. It was for this reason, as we saw, that Jesus traced unbelief to a condition of the heart, and that Paul represented the illumination of the Spirit as absolutely necessary to the apprehension of the truths of the Gospel. The Witness of the Spirit to the Bible, therefore, is not isolated, but a part of His saving work in the soul. He witnesses with our spirits that we are the sons of God; He enables us to recognize the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; but He also takes away our spiritual blindness so that we see the glory of

God in His written Word as well as in His Incarnate Word. Just as an aesthetic sense is necessary for the appreciation of a work of art, so the restored religious sense is necessary for a saving apprehension of God and divine things, and so it is that, though the external attestation and the internal marks of divine authorship are not wanting to the Bible, until men are born again they will not be convinced, but when their spiritual sight is restored they see, not with a blind irrational feeling, but see and behold the divinity of the Bible. The Christian, therefore, believes the Bible ultimately on the testimony of God in His Word recognized by means of the testimony of God in his heart.

This doctrine was first adequately developed by Calvin. Following him it was taken up in Holland, France, England and Scotland. It received full recognition in the form in which Calvin developed it by Ursinus, Piscator, Zanchius, Wollebius, Wendelin, Maresius, Maccovius, and Heidegger.[16]

[16] Calvin, *Institutes*. I. Cap. 7. Calvin devotes an entire chapter to the Witness of the Spirit to the Bible. He was the first to give the doctrine its full significance as the one absolutely indispensable condition of any adequate knowledge of God and divine things for *sinful* man. He taught that the ground of belief in the truth of Scripture is that God is its author (i. 7:4). But our sure persuasion of this is due to the inward Witness of the Spirit in the heart. The necessity for this Witness does not lie in any inadequacy or want of valid reasons for belief in the divine origin of the Bible. "It is true," he says, "that if we were inclined to argue this point, many things might be adduced which certainly evince, if there be any God in heaven, that He is the Author of the Law and the Prophecies and the Gospel. Even though men of learning and deep judgment rise up in opposition, and assert and display all the power of their minds in the dispute, yet unless they are wholly lost to all sense of shame, this confession will be extorted from them, that the Scripture exhibits the plainest evidences that it is God who speaks in it, which manifests its doctrine to be divine" (i. 7:4). The necessity for the Witness of the Spirit is subjective, and lies in the fact that our minds are blinded by sin and that it is true or saving faith, not mere intellectual assent, that is in question. Calvin says that in spite of the validity of the reasons for belief in Scripture "yet it is acting a preposterous part, to endeavor to produce sound faith in the Scripture by disputations"; and he adds that though he could refute all cavils, this would not "fix in their hearts that assurance which is essential to true piety" (i. 7:4).

It is taught in the same form and spirit by such modern Reformed theologians as Van Oostersee, Kuyper, and

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As to the nature of this Witness, Calvin taught that it was an "internal witness" "fixing assurance in the heart", so that those "inwardly taught by the Spirit feel an entire acquiescence in Scripture, and that it is self-authenticated, carrying with it its own evidence, and ought not to be made the subject of demonstration and argument from reason, but obtains the credit which it deserves with us by the testimony of the Spirit" (i. 7:5). He also calls it a divine illumination of the mind which results in an immediate intuitive perception of God in the Scripture, and is therefore not through any process of inference (i. 7:5). He speaks of it once as a "revelation from heaven" (i. 7:5), but does not mean the revelation of a proposition or truth, as is clear from his attacks on the mystics. He is here referring simply to the supernatural or heavenly origin of this witness which the Christian has. Neither did Calvin conceive it as dispensing with the necessity for grounds or reasons of faith; he unfolds these in an entire Chapter,—i. 8. The Witness of the Spirit lies back of all grounds and is necessary in order that the objective evidence may have any effect on the sin-darkened mind. On Calvin's doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit, *vid.* B. B. Warfield, "Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God." PRINCETON THEOL. REVIEW, viii, pp. 219ff, especially pp. 262ff; also Pannier, *Le Témoignage Du Saint-Esprit,* pp. 63-116. For the history of the doctrine in France after the time of Calvin *vid.* Pannier, *op. cit.* pp. 136f.

The Reformed theologians of the age following Calvin expounded this doctrine in the same profound way that Calvin conceived it. They taught that the Bible is self-evidencing, bearing its own marks of divine origin; that man is blinded by sin and cannot attain true or saving faith by means of arguments or the "criteria" of divine authorship in the Bible; that true faith and full certitude are due to the regenerating and illuminating work of the Holy Spirit on the sinful heart. The Testimony of the Spirit for these theologians, then, is this work of the Spirit, and its effect is not a blind conviction without grounds, nor a mystical revelation of truth, but a well-grounded assurance of faith. Thus, for example, Ursinus, *Loci.* pp. 437ff, "Unicum testimonium est, solis Christi spiritu renatis proprium et his solis cognitum, cuius ea vis est, ut non modo veritatem doctrinae propheticae et apostolicae abunde in animis nostris testetur et obsignet, sed corda etiam ad amplectandam eam et sequendam efficaciter flectat et permoveat". Arguments are to be used to confirm faith but this Testimony of the Spirit alone makes us "acquiesce" in God's Word—"Quamvis enim hoc solum efficit, ut in verbo Dei acquiescamus, et solum etiam nobis abunde satisfacere debet: videbimus tamen ipsam quoque Scripturam postquam in isto summa certitudinis et consolationis nostrae constituit, etiam relique in medium affere, idque non sine ratione." Also Zanchius, *Op.* viii, 332-334, says that the testimony of no man can

Bavinck in Holland, and Charles Hodge in America.[17] In Britain it was fully stated by such writers as Owen, Whit-

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render us certain of the divine origin of Scripture. Neither can the Church give the Spirit who is the author of true faith. Not even the Scripture can do this, for though its divinity shines like the sun, the spiritually blind cannot discern it. This is done only by the work of the Spirit illuminating the mind. "Si Scriptura S. hoc ex se sola posset praestare, omnes qui illam aut audiunt, aut legunt, etiam agnoscerent, esse verbum Dei, cum revera sit verbum Dei. Non omnes hoc novunt, etsi legunt et audiunt . . . Etsi igitur Scriptura in se lumen est lucernaque; accensa imo Sol splendidissimus: tamen sicut Sol non potest sese caeco homini quis et qualis sit patefacere, nisi caecus aliunde illuminetur: Ita Scriptura non potest sese agnoscendam re ipsa praebere cuipiam homini, nisi Spiritu S. mens hominis ad videndam Scripturae dignitatem illustretur; ac aures ad auriendum Deum in illis loquentem, aperiantur. Quare neque Scriptura sua sola dignitate et auctoritate quam habet sine Spiritu sancto sufficit ad hoc, ut quis eam agnoscat certum esse Dei verbum". Zanchius does not undervalue arguments such as the testimony of the Church; he simply asserts the necessity of the work of the Spirit on the heart before it can be convinced by evidence. One important point to notice is that Zanchius does not, like the Lutherans, identify the Testimony of the Spirit with the saving efficacy of the Scripture, but expressly distinguishes this latter as one of the marks of the divine origin of the Scripture, from the Testimony of the Spirit which gives effect to all the evidence—"Multas variasque Scripturae ipsius demonstrationes, tum ab ipsius in nobis vi et efficacia, tum a multis aliis rebus et effectis extra nos desumptas: quibus tanquam sigillis veritas in nobis per Spiritum S. obsignatur, ac nos in illa magis ac magis quotidie confirmamur, hanc sacram Scripturam verum ac vivum esse sermonem Dei." This testimony is an internal illuminating power of the Spirit of God in the heart—"Testimonium Spiritus S. intus in corde nobis testificantis et persuadentis, hoc esse verbum Dei: et simul mentem illuminantis, et coelestem veritatem atque excellentiam verbi ostendentis; atque ita efficientis, ut nos non solum certo credamus, sed etiam vere agnoscamus, Deum esse eum, qui in Scripturis loquitur". Similarly *vid.* Wollebius, *Compend. Theol. Christ.* pp. 3 and 4—In answer to the question how the "divinity of Scripture" is recognized by us, he says that the witness to this is twofold—"principial" and "instrumental" or "ministerial". The latter is the testimony of the Church, the former is the testimony of the Spirit *externally* in the Scripture which He inspired. But this external Witness is efficacious only by the internal Witness of the Spirit in the heart—"Testimonium autem hoc duplex principiale et ministrale. Principiale est testimonium Spiritus sancti; foris in ipsa Scriptura; intus vero in corde ac mente hominis fidelis ab ipso illuminati, loquentis, eique Scripturae divinitatem persuadentis. Ministrale vero testimonium est testimonium Ecclesiae." The same truths are

aker, Gillespie and others.[18] The doctrine was not only not made use of by the Arminian theologians, but its validity was

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taught by Piscator, *Explicatio Aphor. Doct. Christ.* Aph. vi. p. 94—True faith in the "authority" of Scripture is due to the Witness of the Spirit, because, though the Scripture is αὐτόπιστος, man is blinded by sin—"Et si autem haec scriptura fidem apud omnes meretur, tanquam θεόπνευστος et αὐτόπιστος: tamen testimonio Spiritus sancti sanciri eam in cordibus nostris oportet, ut nobis certa eius constet authoritas, ac proinde ut plenam ei fidem habeamus." Piscator illustrates this from the inability of the blind to see the sun—"Etsi sol clarissime lucet, tamen lumen ejus videre non potest caecus; ut autem videat, necesse est illuminari oculos ejus luce interiore. Ita nos natura sumus caeci in videndis rebus divinis clarissime in Scriptura propositis; ut autem eas videamus, necesse est illuminari oculos mentis nostrae per Spiritum sanctum." Maresius, *Systema Breve Universae Theol.* p. 11, brings out the following points—1. the Witness is both objective and internal; 2. it does not produce a "blind" faith, but is through the marks of God's hand in Scripture; 3. it is an illumination of the mind to see the divinity of Scripture; 4. it produces full certitude and true faith; 5. it witnesses to the divine origin of Scripture—"Sed quamvis haec et similia argumenta sive motiva, impiis redarguendis et convincendis apprime inserviant, tamen ut quis certitudine fidei persuadeatur Scripturam esse a Deo, . . . opus habet testimonio interno Sp. Sancti per illam ipsam Scripturam efficacis, in quod fides sua ultimo resolvatur, tanquam in sui causam efficientem principialem . . . Hac autem persuasione nihil certius; cum lumen fidei ita se menti insinuet, ut per illud fidelis non solum credat, sed etiam se bene et vere credere certo sentiat." Maccovius, *Loci Communes.* Cap. 4, pp. 27, 28, teaches that the arguments for the divine authority of Scripture are not efficient without the Witness of the Spirit which is of the nature of an illuminating of the mind—"Verum enim vero haec argumenta omnia parum momenti adferunt ad credendum, nisi accesserit illuminatio mentis nostrae facta per Spiritum Sanctum, quam vocamus testimonium Sp. Sancti. Testimonium autem Sp. S. est lux quaedam ita mentem perfundens, ut eam leniter afficiat, ostendatque rationes ipsi rei, quae credenda proponitur, insitas, sed antea occultas". Wendelin teaches precisely the same doctrine,—*Christianae Theol. Libri,* i. p. 23—"Quaeritur inter nos et Pontificos; Unde pendeant Scripturae autoritas quoad nos? Seu, unde constet Scripturam esse divinam, vel a Deo inspiratam? Nos statuimus principialiter id constare: (1) Ex persuasione Spiritus sancti, qui de divinitate sacrae Scripturae nos certos facit." Precisely the same is the view of Heidegger, *Corp. Theol.* Loc. ii. Secs. 12, 13, 14, 15, p. 28. The Spirit of truth opens the eyes of our hearts which are spiritually blind, so that we see the divinity manifest in God's Word—"Ille oculos nostros illuminat, ut videant in verbo ab ipsomet inspirato Divinitatis et θεοπρεπείας omnis radios. Ille, ceu sigillum Dei, quo obsignati sumus, 2 Cor. 1:22, nos tum per argumenta Divini-

denied.[19] This was only the natural consequence of their naturalistic minimizing of the saving work of the Holy Spirit on the heart. And the same thing was true of the Socinians.[20] In the eighteenth century it was reduced to

tatis in verbo Dei splendentia tum supra ea, tum contra argumenta, quae caro et sanguis eidem opponit, certos reddit, quod verbum Scripturae a Deo et Deo dignum sit". No full historical sketch of the doctrine of these theologians has been given. Some material will be found in Heppe, *Die Dogmatik der evangelisch-reformirten Kirche,* pp. 20-22. The doctrine also found expression in the Reformed Symbols such as the Gallican Confession, the Belgic Confession, the Anglican Confession, and the first and second Helvetic Confessions; also in the Netherlands Confession, *vid.* Müller, *Die Bekenntnisschriften der Reformirten Kirche;* and also Pannier, *op. cit.,* pp. 124-136. Probably its best and most adequate confessional statement is that in the Westminster Confession i. 5—"We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to a high and reverent esteem for the Holy Scriptures; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many and incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word, in our hearts".

[17] Van Oostersee, *Christian Dogmatics,* i. pp. 149-154. Kuyper, *Encyclopaedie Der Heilige Godgeleerdheid,* ii, pp. 501-511. H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*[2], i, pp. 621-647. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology,* iii, p. 69; also *Way of Life,* pp. 13-28.

[18] John Owen, *The Reason of Faith, Works,* vol. iv. pp. 1-100, especially pp. 82ff. William Whitaker, *A Disputation on Holy Scripture,* pp. 332-358. George Gillespie, *Works,* vol. ii. pp. 105ff. John Ball, *A Treatise of Faith,* pp. 13, 14. John Arrowsmith, *Chain of Principles,* pp. 103, 104. W. Lyford, *Principles of Faith and Good Conscience,* p. 2; *The Plain Man's Senses Exercised,* p. 38. John White, *A Way to the Tree of Life,* pp. 44, 45. Edward Reynolds, *Works,* vol v. pp. 154, 155. *Cf.* B. B. Warfield, "The Westminster Doctrine of Holy Scripture," in The Presbyterian and Reformed Review, iv. pp. 626ff.

[19] Episcopius, *Instit. Theol.* iv. 1 cap. 5; Parag. 2. Limborch, *Theol. Christiana,* i. 4: parags. 15-17. In the case of these Remonstrant theologians *fides humana* and *rational arguments* are substituted for the *fides divina* and the Witness of the Spirit. This was the natural result of their semi-Pelagian ideas.

[20] The Socinians also rejected the doctrine of the Witness of the Holy Spirit, holding that everything must be proved by reason, *vid.* Fock, *Der Socinianismus,* p. 336.

the argument from experience by some of the Supra-naturalists and Rationalists, as for example Baumgarten; and denied by others, such as Wegscheider.[21] The attempted revival of the doctrine by Schleiermacher[22] in reaction from Rationalism was only a spurious one, being wholly vitiated by the identification of the Holy Spirit with the spirit of man, and the reduction of the Witness to an argument from experience; while its attempted revival in Holland by Scholten did not rise in its conception above the argument from experience.[23]

In the second place it is necessary to determine as briefly as possible the "content" or "object" of this Witness of the Holy Spirit to the Bible. To what in regard to the Bible is this testimony given? This witnessing, of course, is a part of the entire saving work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the sinner. It is not something separate from the

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[21] Baumgarten, *Dogmatik,* pp. 120ff. reduced the Witness of the Spirit to the argument from experience. This is true also of Less, *Beweis der Wahrheit der christl. Relig.* pp. 141, 143; and also of Reinhard, *Dogmatik,* p. 65. Having been reduced thus by the Supra-naturalists to the argument from experience, it was rejected altogether by the Rationalists, *vid.* Brettschneider, *Handbuch der Dogmatik,* i. p. 206; Wegscheider, *Inst. Theol.* For an account of the treatment of the doctrine in the eighteenth century Rationalism *cf.* Martius, *op. cit.,* pp. 26ff.

[22] Schleiermacher, *Der christl. Glaube,* parag. 142:2. The Testimony of the Spirit is, according to Schleiermacher, given through the mediation of Christians in the Church. The Witness is, therefore, the testimony of the collective experience of Christians to the Scripture, and though it gains thus a certain amount of objectivity in reference to the individual Christian, it does not go beyond the argument from experience. Moreover the identification of the Holy Spirit with the collective consciousness of Christians, does away with the very foundation of the doctrine of the Reformers. It is characteristic of the doctrine of the Reformers, and in this they followed the Scriptures closely, always to insist on the essential distinction between the Spirit of God and the finite spirit, and to maintain the personality and transcendence of the Holy Spirit. Schleiermacher's attempted revival of the doctrine was a spurious one.

[23] Scholten reduces the Witness of the Holy Spirit to the argument from experience and describes it as the "testimony of the heart and conscience" which are "purified by communion with Christ". *Cf.* Van Oostersee, *op. cit.,* i. p. 152.

whole of the Christian life. The Spirit does guide into all truth; brings us to confess Christ as Lord; testifies to the glory of Christ; makes believers know all things which have been given them by God; assures them of Divine Sonship. But the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the Bible, though closely connected with all this, is additional to this, and is not to be identified with the gift to the believer of assurance of faith. The conception which has been stated of the nature of this Witness determines its object. If it were a blind and groundless testimony, or the mystical communication of a proposition, then it might be supposed to include questions the determination of which must rest solely upon historical and critical and exegetical grounds. If we are to conceive of the Spirit as giving to the soul a truth such as—"The Bible is God's Word", why might He not say to us such and such a book is canonical or is not canonical, or that the Bible is plenarily inspired? But the Witness is not the mystical communication of a truth, nor the causing to emerge in consciousness of a blind and unfounded faith. Hence it does not witness to questions which are to be determined by exegetical and historical considerations. The Spirit, then, does not testify to the nature or extent of the Bible's inspiration. These are questions to be exegetically determined, and which can be determined in no other way. Of course after we have determined what is the Bible's doctrine of inspiration, we must ask whether it is true. And here the evidences for the truth of the Bible must be brought in. And the efficacy of these on the heart will depend on the work of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless the Witness of the Spirit is not to the nature of the inspiration of the Bible. An examination of the passages already cited from the old Reformed theologians will show that they did not conceive of the testimony of the Spirit as being to the doctrine of the Inspiration of Scripture. Piscator,[24] it is true, used the term *θεόπνευ-*

[24] *Cf.* passages cited from the Reformed Theologians in note No. 16. By using the term "inspiration," in this connection, to denote the divine origin of Scripture, the Reformed Theologians did not make the mistake

στος in speaking of that to which the Spirit bears witness, but the passage shows that he did not intend any particular doctrine of Inspiration, but rather the divine origin of the Scripture. In this he agreed with the other theologians cited who constantly spoke of the "divinity of Scripture" and said that this shone forth from it like the rays of the sun.

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of supposing that the question of the nature of the Bible's inspiration could be determined otherwise than by the exegesis of the statements of the Scripture writers concerning the subject.

Quite different from this, however, is the view of W. Robertson Smith, followed by T. Lindsay, James Denney, J. P. Lilley, M. Dods, C. A. Briggs and others. These writers suppose that the term "inspiration" as applied to Scripture denotes simply the fact that the Bible is a means of grace through the influence of the Holy Spirit on the heart. This, according to them, constitutes its "inspiration." On this view we recognize the divine origin and truth of the Scripture by the Spirit's Witness through its saving power, and it is this saving power which gives the Scripture its authority, and which constitutes its "inspiration." In this way the idea of inspiration is lowered by the attempt to determine its nature, not by exegesis, but by asking what we find the Bible to be. Hence our idea of Scripture is substituted for that of the Bible concerning its own nature, and Scripture is regarded as a rule of faith only in so far as it is a means of grace. The Witness of the Spirit, therefore, instead of confirming the authority of Scripture, as it did in the Reformed Theology, becomes a means of erecting a subjective norm above the Bible, thus doing away with its authority as a rule of faith. Moreover the Witness of the Spirit, being thus reduced to the experience of the saving power of the Scripture, is supposed to be given directly or immediately to so much of the historical element in the Bible as our Christian consciousness finds essential. This essential part, it is supposed, will be left untouched by historical criticism which may do as it pleases with the supposedly non-essential parts of Scripture. In this way Christianity is supposed to be rendered independent of the results of historical criticism, in very much the same manner as the Ritschlian theologians believe it to be. A false subjectivism is thus introduced through the mistake of seeking to determine in a subjective way questions which can be settled only by an objective investigation of historical evidence. This entire view rests upon the mistake of supposing that, because saving faith is personal trust and not a mere intellectual assent, therefore its content cannot be given by an objective communication of truth by God. Hence Ritschl and his followers maintained that the Reformation idea of faith rendered necessary a new idea of revelation and inspiration, and they also claimed that they were the true successors of Calvin and Luther. In this they

Neither is the Witness of the Spirit to the Canonicity of any or all of the Biblical books. The Witness, not being the communication of any new knowledge or matter of fact, does not inform the Christian what books the Apostles imposed on the infant Church to be its rule of faith and practice. This is a question which requires historical investigation and which must be determined upon historical grounds. The appeal, from objective scientific considerations to the internal life of the Christian for the settlement of such questions, is not only vain; it has been used in the interests of an attempt to elevate the human mind and the Christian consciousness above the Scripture in a rationalistic spirit which accepts only what appeals to us. It is true that the old Protestant theologians did sometimes speak as if the Holy Spirit bore witness to the Canonicity of the books of Scripture, but in regard to this two remarks should be made. First, this is not their prevalent way of putting the matter. They almost invariably conceive of the Witness

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were followed by W. Robertson Smith and the writers above mentioned, all of whom suppose that the seventeenth century theologians departed from the religious view of the first Reformers. They are mistaken in this. Calvin, as we have seen, believed that the Witness of the Spirit is to the divine origin of the Bible. The nature of inspiration is to be determined objectively by exegesis, and the Canon also objectively by historical investigation. We believe the Bible ultimately because the Spirit enables us to see that it is from God, but that does not in the least affect the truth that we are to seek to determine by exegesis what it says as to its inspiration. It is true that a mechanical view of inspiration was held by some of the Protestant theologians of the 17th and 18th centuries, but the majority of them taught the same high view held by Calvin and all of the early Reformers.

On the view which we have been criticising, see W. Robertson Smith, *What History Teaches Us to Seek in the Bible, Lectures and Essays,* Ed. by J. S. Black and G. W. Chrystal, pp. 207ff.; and especially *Answer to the Form of Libel,* pp. 18ff; T. M. Lindsay, "Professor W. Robertson Smith's Doctrine of Scripture," *Expositor,* Series iv. vol. 10, pp. 241ff; also the Doctrine of Scripture, *ibid.* Series v. vol. 1, pp. 278ff. J. Denney, *Studies in Theology,* pp. 204ff; M. Dods, *The Bible. Its Origin and Nature,* pp. 123ff, 135ff; J. P. Lilley, *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles,* Appendix, p. 104; C. A. Briggs, *Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture,* pp. 165ff.

of the Spirit as being to the "divinity" i.e. to the divine origin of the Scripture; and secondly, when they use the term Canon and Canonicity, they use it in a twofold sense to denote at once the idea of the extent of the canon of Scripture and the idea of the divine origin and authority of Scripture. And when they speak of Canonicity as being the object of the Witness of the Holy Spirit, it is the latter idea to which they usually refer. This is true for example in the case of Quenstedt,[25] and it is true also of the Reformed theologians. Calvin has been supposed to have held that the Spirit testified concerning what books are canonical, but this rests upon misapprehension.[26] Calvin's

[25] B. B. Warfield, *Princeton Theol. Rev.,* vol. viii, p. 291.

[26] *Cf.* B. B. Warfield, *ibid.,* pp. 283ff. Reuss, *History of the Canon,* etc. Chap. 16, and Pannier, *op. cit.,* p. 252, both seem to suppose that Calvin sought to determine the Canon of Scripture by means of the Witness of the Spirit. This rests, as Dr. Warfield has shown, on the misapprehension of two passages from Calvin. In *Inst.* i. 7:1, repelling the Romish idea that the Scripture has only such weight as the Church gives it, Calvin says, "For thus dealing with the Holy Spirit as a mere laughing stock, they ask, Who shall give us confidence that these (Scriptures) have come from God,—who assure us that they have reached our time safe and intact,—who persuade us that one book should be received reverently, another expunged from the number,—if the Church should not prescribe a certain rule for all these things. It depends, therefore, they say, on the Church, both what reverence is due Scripture, and what books should be inscribed in her catalogue." This quotation shows that the Romanists argued that the Church assures us of the contents and even the integrity of Scripture. But Calvin does not say that we are assured of the Canon by the Spirit. He says that the Romish view is wrong, but does not imply that the Witness of the Spirit assures us of all these things which the Church pretends to settle.

The other passage is in the *Confession of La Rochelle,* and does apparently attribute the determination of what books are Canonical to the Witness of the Spirit. But this Article was not by Calvin, but was added to a draft submitted by Calvin by the Synod of Paris. Calvin's own article did not contain this idea. Pannier, *op. cit.,* p. 141 cites Lespine, a Protestant disputant with two Doctors of the Sorbonne, as teaching that the Witness of the Spirit determines the Canon, but only indirectly by inference from the divine authorship of the books. All of the Reformed Theologians which we have cited in note 16, taught that it is to the divine origin of Scripture that the Witness of the Spirit is given, and though sometimes the word "canonical" is used, it seems to denote the idea of being authoritative and from God.

whole discussion shows clearly that he takes the Scriptures as a whole, conceives this as given on historical and critical grounds, and conceives of the Testimony of the Spirit as being to the divine origin of the Scripture.

If, however, an erroneous mystical view of the nature of the Witness of the Spirit to the Bible is mistaken in conceiving of this Witness as extending to exegetical and historico-critical questions, the view of the nature of the Spirit's Witness which confounds it with the argument from experience errs in limiting the object, to which the Witness is given, to the saving truths of the Bible or to the truth and divine origin of the revelation or the Gospel which the Bible records. If the Witness of the Spirit is identified with the testimony of Christian experience, it must of course be conceived of in this way. For Christian experience testifies not so much to the Bible, as to the saving truths of the Gospel, and from these truths it may extend or spread till it covers the Bible which contains these truths. But if the Witness of the Spirit is simply the experience of the saving power of the Gospel, it obviously can extend only indirectly to the Bible as a whole, and only indirectly also to any fundamental Christian truths which transcend experience. There is no immediate Witness to the nature of the future life of the Christian, any more than there is to the Virgin Birth of Christ. This is the view of the modern Lutherans and of all who identify the Witness of the Spirit with the argument from Christian experience, as well as of some who do not fall into this mistake.[27] But

[27] In the case of Quenstedt *op. cit.* p. 140, it is not so clearly stated that it is the "saving truths of Scripture" as distinct from the Scripture, to which the testimony is given. Baier *op. cit.*, p. 86, in the passage already cited regards the testimony of the Spirit as being given to the "doctrines comprehended in the Scriptures". Hollaz says that it is the "written word" which we "read from" these Scripture books, cf. *op. cit.*, 125. It cannot be said, however, that the old Lutheran theologians carried out the logic of their view of the nature of the Witness of the Spirit, so as to make a sharp distinction between the saving truths which the Scripture contains and the Scripture itself. This has been done by Klaiber, *op. cit.*, pp. 17f, 30f, Martius *op. cit.* p. 43, Philippi, *op. cit.* i. pp. 135f. This also is the view of

this idea of the object of the Spirit's Witness results from a wrong view of its nature. There is a witness of our experience to the saving truths of the Gospel, such as Justification, Divine Sonship, the power of Christ to save. The divine origin of these great truths may be inferred from the experience of their saving power, as may also the divine origin of the Bible which contains them. But since this is after all the witness, not of God to us, but of our experience to the Word of God, it can bear direct witness only to that which it feels to be divine.

The Witness of the Spirit is the Witness of God to us. It therefore proceeds in the opposite way from the argument from experience. It is a witness to the Bible itself as such and as a whole, and hence by inference we may proceed to infer the divine and revelatory character of the contents of the Scripture. When our eyes have been opened and our spiritual blindness has been removed, we can see in the Bible itself all the marks of its divine authorship. The saving power of some of these truths is only one of these marks. It is the Book itself which we are enabled by the Spirit to perceive could have its origin only from God. When with unclouded spiritual eyes we look upon the Bible as a whole, we immediately see the evident marks of its divine authorship, just as one with aesthetic sense sees the marks of the master in the masterpiece. The Witness of the Spirit, therefore, is not to the revelation contained in Scripture which "finds us" and thence to the Scripture as a whole, but directly to the divine origin of the Scripture as a whole, spreading from this to its contents. It does not, therefore, assure us immediately of the Virgin Birth or of the Resurrection of Christ, any more than it does of the truth of the Old Testament history or the doctrine of

such Reformed theologians as Van Oostersee, *op. cit.* i. p. 151, and H. Bavinck, *op. cit.*, pp. 639ff. Bavinck conceives the Testimony of the Spirit as given directly to the doctrines of Scripture, and as spreading from them to the historical parts of Scripture with which they are inseparably connected. John De Witt, *op. cit.* p. 81, also conceives the Testimony of the Spirit as being given to the saving truths of the Gospel contained in the Scripture.

eternal punishment. But it does assure us that this Book is of divine origin and authority so that it supports these great facts and truths mediately and by way of inference. It is, in a word, simply this—God has left the marks of His authorship on the Bible, and the Spirit of God opens our eyes to behold in Scripture the marks of its divine authorship or origin.

The third question which arises concerns the bearing of this doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit upon the value and necessity of Christian Apologetics which aims at an objectively valid and rational defence of the Christian view of the world and the divine and supernatural origin of Christianity and of the Bible. Does the fact that, because of the blindness of the sinful heart, faith is the gift of God's Spirit, do away with the value or necessity of evidence for the divine origin of the Bible? In seeking briefly to answer this question, three things must be kept in mind. First, the Witness of the Spirit is not a ground of faith among other grounds. It cannot, therefore, be substituted for the grounds of faith. The Holy Spirit in Regeneration is the efficient cause of faith. We believe, therefore, by means of this Witness, not on account of it. The Witness, therefore, does not dispense with the value or necessity of the grounds of faith, or in this instance, the marks on account of which we recognize that God is speaking to us in the Scripture. It is true that we must be gifted with an aesthetic sense in order to recognize the masterpiece or painting and to discriminate it from that which has no aesthetic value. But given this aesthetic sense, the marks of the master's hand must be present in the work of art or there will be no marks for us to see and recognize. Just so God's Spirit opens the eye of faith, but that eye beholds an object and recognizes the hand of God in the Bible. Second, it must be remembered that the reason why saving faith in Christ, Christianity, and the Bible cannot be produced by evidence or arguments, is not due to any insufficiency of evidence or any want of reasons of universal validity and

objective character, but is due to the subjective inability of the sinful heart to be affected by such evidence. If the evidence were insufficient or invalid, what would be needed would be more or better evidence. But such additional evidence the Spirit does not supply. He opens the sin-blinded eyes and prepares the heart, so that the evidence may have its proper effect. Third, it must be borne in mind that saving faith, like all faith, is a grounded conviction. It does not differ from knowledge or from a merely "historic" or "speculative" faith in that the latter rests on grounds or evidence while saving faith does not. Nor is the distinction that the grounds of knowledge and of "speculative" faith are objective, valid and sufficient, while those of saving faith are not. The distinction lies in the nature of the evidence and in the source of the mental act in each case. In knowledge the conviction of mind is based on the internal testimony of sense perception, self-consciousness, and reason. In the case of faith, the conviction is based on testimony external to the subject. In religious faith, it is the testimony of God Himself. In reference to the Scripture, God has borne witness in it to His own authorship, and faith in this is grounded in these criteria of its divine origin. The distincton between a merely speculative faith in God's Word produced by evidence, and saving faith and trust in it, lies further in the fact that the source of the latter consists in the regenerating and illuminating work of the Holy Spirit on the sinner's heart. Because you cannot make a man a Christian by merely presenting him with arguments addressed to his intellect, it does not by any means follow that he can be made a Christian apart from all evidence of the truth of Christianity. Nor does it follow, because you cannot argue a man into a saving belief in the divine origin of the Bible without the work of God's Spirit in his heart, that therefore all such evidence is valueless. True faith is God's gift, but He gives no blind faith and no ready-made faith. He prepares our hearts and minds so that the evidence of the divine origin of the Bible being

presented, the prepared heart responds to the evidence because its sinful blindness has been removed. It is true, therefore, that saving faith will not arise without the Witness of the Spirit, but neither will it arise without some evidence valid for the subject of the faith. Let us emphasize the fact that saving faith cannot be produced by arguments, not even by the revelation of God in Christ, because the soul is dead in sin; but let us remember that there is always evidence of some kind present when saving faith arises, and that objectively there is adequate and sufficient evidence for the divine origin of Christianity and the Bible, and that this is logically the prius of our personal act of faith. The Witness of the Spirit, therefore, is absolutely necessary to Christian faith and Christian certitude. Without it all evidence and all arguments are useless to produce any true faith and full certitude of faith. Nevertheless it does not do away with the place and value of the evidence both internal and external for the divine origin of Christianity and the Bible.

This statement will enable us to see the mistake underlying two chief misconceptions upon this point. The Ritschlian theologians with their distinction between religious and theoretic knowledge, their depreciation of Christian Apologetics, and their doctrine of value-judgments, have invariably claimed to be the true successors of Luther and Calvin, and to have rescued Protestantism from a rationalistic intellectualism. They thus practically identify their idea that religious knowledge consists in "judgments of value" with the doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit as taught by the Reformers. The two doctrines are totally different. The one is the fruit of a fundamental religious agnosticism; the other of a deep evangelicalism. They differ first in regard to the evidences or grounds of faith. According to the Ritschlian, these are not objectively valid or rationally sufficient. There is, therefore, a deficiency of universally valid evidence. On the other hand, according to the old Protestant theologians, this deficiency is not in the

objective evidence but in the spiritual condition of the subject of faith. The evidence fails of effect because the heart is spiritually dead. In the second place, there is a fundamental difference in the conception of the subjective hindrance to a rational faith. According to the Ritschlian position there is a fundamental dualism between the heart and the head apart from the effect of sin, a dualism which is fatal to Christian faith. What the Ritschlian means to say is that theoretic knowledge is limited to phenomena, and therefore faith has free scope in the sphere of the transcendent objects of religious faith. But this separation of spheres is impossible, and where a rationally grounded faith in God and His supernatural modes of action is given up, one of two positions only remains, each fatal to Christian faith. Either we must say that with the heart we believe in supernatural Christianity although our head tells us it is impossible, in which case faith cannot survive because it cannot be compelled; or else we must reduce our Christianity to the limits of our philosophy and eliminate from it all that Naturalism forbids us to retain. Then we shall have given up supernatural Christianity. We shall not even be able to say that we believe in the Deity of Christ because of His value to the Christian heart, but only that His Deity consists in His value to the Christian heart. Christianity is thus reduced to the basis of the bare natural religious sentiment. In all this there is a fatal dualism between the head and the heart, between faith and knowledge, which is incurable because rooted in human nature as such, and which does away with the rational basis of all religious faith and tends to reduce the religious consciousness to a merely subjective feeling without any sure objective reference or validity.[28]

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[28] In erecting a sharp distinction between religious and theoretic knowledge, such as is found in Ritschl's *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung* and in Herrmann's *Verkehr des Christen mit Gott* and his early work *Die Religion im Verhältniss zum Welterkennen u. zur Sittlichkeit,* it was not intended to assert that we can believe a thing to be true on one set of grounds and know it to be false or impossible on

Totally different from this is the doctrine of the Witness of the Holy Spirit. The subjective hindrance here is superinduced by sin. The dualism in man is between the carnal mind which is at enmity with God and the things of God's Spirit which can only be spiritually discerned. When, therefore, the sinful soul is born again by the almighty and supernatural power of the Spirit, its original capacity for the knowledge of God is restored, and experiencing in the heart the power of God, it is prepared to recognize the divine power as it wrought for man's salvation from sin objectively in the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

There is a second view which depresses the value of Christian Apologetics because of the doctrine of the Witness of the Holy Spirit. This view is totally removed from the naturalistic and rationalistic presuppositions which un-

another set of grounds. Such a position has been unfairly attributed to the Ritschlian theologians, but it misrepresents them. What was intended was the assertion that so called "theoretic knowledge" is limited to the sphere of science so that it cannot encroach upon the sphere of the objects of religious faith. But quite apart from the question as to whether knowledge can thus be limited, the Ritschlians were unable to keep faith and knowledge, or religion and philosophy, in these separate spheres. Their phenomenalistic theory of knowledge and their rejection of metaphysics from theology necessarily resulted in a reduction of the content of faith at the demand of their philosophical position. Hence, since the metaphysical theology reached back into the New Testament, their doctrine of religious knowledge depressed the authority of Scripture after the fashion of Rationalism, and did not exalt the authority of Scripture as did the doctrine of the Witness of the Holy Spirit. The value-judgment is not a witness to Scripture but an instrument for sifting out the truth from the Scripture. Kaftan attempted to vindicate the objective character of religious knowledge and the unity of truth in his *Wahrheit der Christl. Religion,* but in his distinction between Opinion, Faith, and Knowledge, he brings back the old dualism. Wobbermin, *Der Christliche Gottesglaube in seinem Verhältniss zur gegenwärtigen Philosophie,* has perhaps done more justice to the task of Christian Apologetics than any other of the Ritschlian theologians. It has an "indirect use" *i.e.,* the Christian faith objectively may be rationally defended; but directly in the genesis of saving faith reasons are of no value. But Wobbermin's position is unsatisfactory. The faith which the Holy Spirit gives is not a blind or groundless faith, and while no amount of evidence will make a man a Christian, it does not follow that faith will arise apart from all evidence.

derlie the Ritschlian position. It is rooted in the deeply evangelical spirit and thorough supernaturalism characteristic of Calvin and all the Reformed theologians. It is due to a deep sense of the effects of sin and of the power of God's grace. We refer to the view of Drs. Kuyper and Bavinck. They argue that, because saving faith is due to the Witness of the Spirit, and because arguments do not produce the conviction of the Christian, therefore rational grounds of faith may be dispensed with. Apologetics has a secondary place, and is the "fruit" of faith. Bavinck[29] seeks to show that Christian certitude is not the result of Christian experience which really grows out of it, nor of arguments which cannot give absolute certitude or true faith, but that it simply flows from faith itself which springs up in a renewed heart in contact with Christ. Kuyper[30] has fully worked out these principles in his profound discussion of the effects of sin and of regeneration upon our knowledge and upon science. The unregenerate and the regenerate form two classes, distinct in kind and hence totally removed the one from the other in their intellectual processes and products. The one class is working out a science under the obscuring effects of sin, the other under the illumination of the Spirit in regeneration. No arguments can lead from one sphere to the other, hence no arguments for the science of the regenerate can be regarded as universally valid. Apologetics is of secondary importance. It is for the benefit of the Christian and for the purpose of defending Christian faith, and not for the purpose of grounding it or serving under the Spirit's power to produce faith.

We have seen, however, that the doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit does not imply this attitude to the arguments for the divine origin of Christianity. Saving faith, as was said, cannot be produced by arguments, nor indeed by the revelation of God in Christ, because faith and unbelief depend on the condition of the heart, and the soul is dead in

[29] Bavinck, *Zekerheid des Geloofs*[2], pp 63ff.

[30] Kuyper, *Enclyclopaedie der heilige Godgeleerdheid,* ii., Afd. 1, Hoofdst. 2 and 3, pp. 52-129.

sin. The ultimate source of faith is the power of the Spirit. But faith is not blind, and rational grounds may enter into the grounds of even saving faith, and without some grounds valid for the subject, it cannot arise. In the case of faith in the divine origin of the Bible, no doubt the marks of God's hand and His self-revelation in the Scripture are the ultimate grounds of faith. But they are nevertheless evidences or reasons for belief, and in fully recognizing these, Drs. Kuyper and Bavinck admit a reason for faith which is after all universally valid, and apart from the effects of sin on the mind would be recognized as such. Consider for a moment Dr. Kuyper's two classes of men, the regenerate and the unregenerate. Since the difficulty with the latter and that which discriminates them from the former is subjective, lying in the state of the heart, it follows that the reasons for the faith of the former are universally valid, and under the influence of the Spirit may be instrumental even in the increase of saving faith in the world. If the trouble with the unregenerate is in their own heart, it follows that there is nothing the matter with the grounds of faith. In addition to this, so far as their subjective condition is concerned, the difference is not absolute. In the one class, sin has destroyed no faculty of the soul and some religious sense is kept alive by Common Grace. In the other class, regeneration has not removed all at once the effects of sin on the heart and mind. This is not at all to be understood as implying that the transition from the unregenerate class to the regenerate class can be effected by arguments. This, we repeat, can be brought about only by the Spirit of God and His almighty power. It is only intended to indicate that in themselves the evidences of Christianity are universally valid, and that even in regard to the production of saving faith they play an important part, while as grounds of Christian certitude of the divine origin of Christianity and the Bible they are indispensable, since the Witness of the Spirit is the efficient cause, and not one of the grounds of faith.

All this, however, does not in the least minimize the absolute necessity of the Witness of the Holy Spirit, without whose light in our hearts we would grope in darkness, unable to be convinced by any evidence, and too blind to see the glory of God as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ and in the pages of the Word of God.

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